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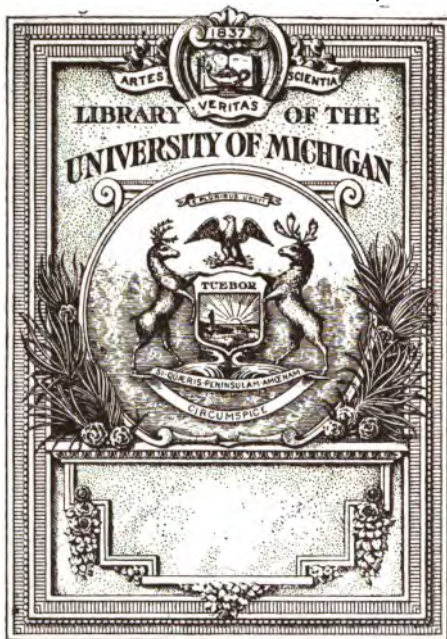
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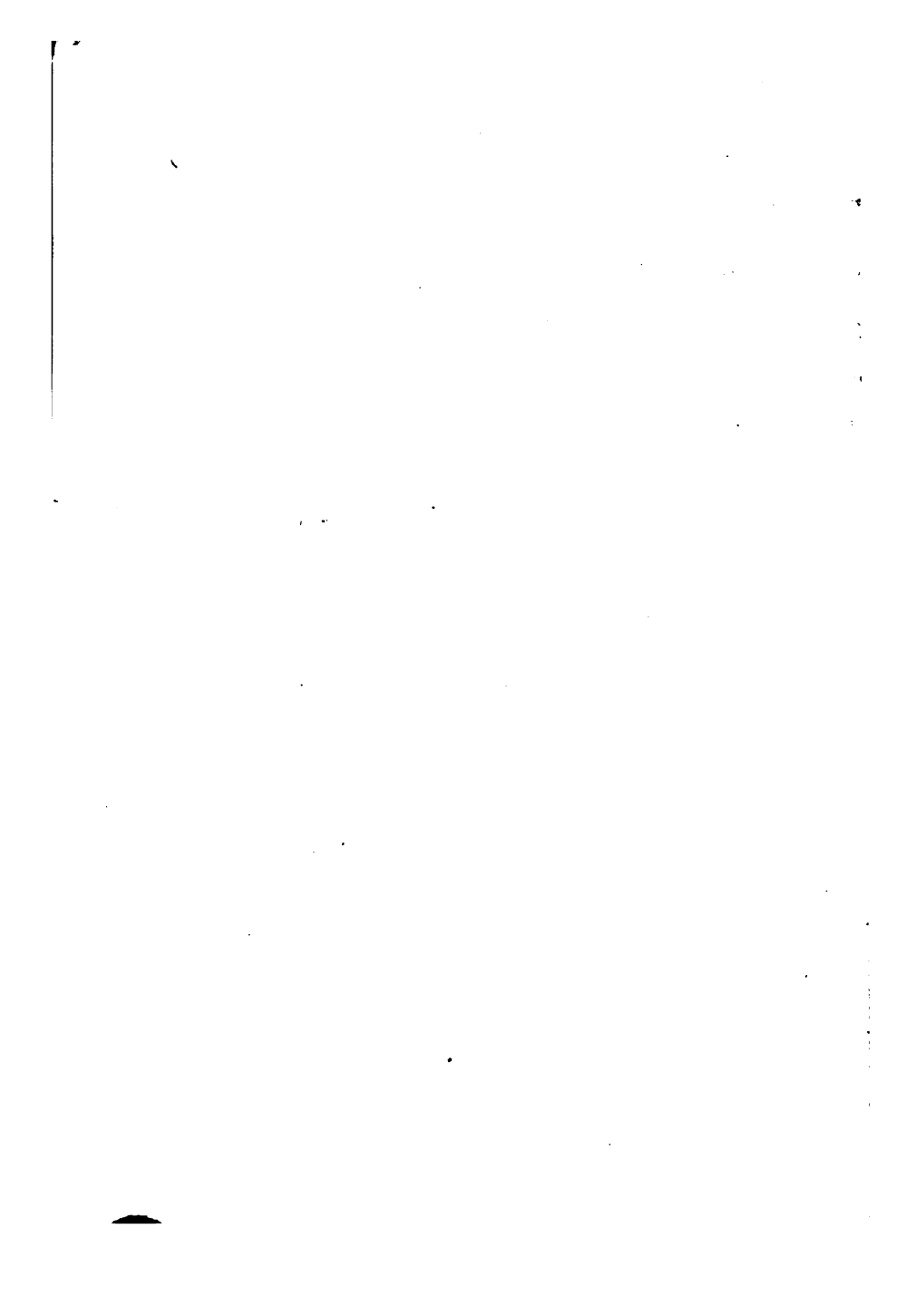
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A CRY OUT OF THE DARK

A CRY OUT OF THE DARK

THREE PLAYS:

THE MEDDLER
BOLO AND BABETTE
THE MADHOUSE

BY

HENRY BAILEY STEVENS



BOSTON

THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY

1919

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IN COURT

THE CRIMINAL

[Who has slain eight million men and squandered a hundred and seventy-five billion dollars]

This business that you keep talkin' and talkin' about—what's the use of rehearsin' it? Why can't we forget it?

THE MEDDLER

THE VOICE OF LOVE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE GENTLEMAN

THE SCHOLAR

THE SECOND

THE DOCTOR

THE MINISTER

BOY

THE MEDDLER

THE MEDDLER

[SCENE: *A room just off the street in an old-fashioned house.*]

THE GENTLEMAN

Yes, it is true.

THE SCHOLAR

In that case I am appalled. I had thought that we had reached a stage in the process of evolution when such things could not be. Yet I have always maintained that we must have the courage to face facts as they are, and if this is true, we must not be afraid to recognize the truth. That method of reasoning is axiomatic with me. I go no further than the truth.

THE GENTLEMAN

You are very sensible, then. You must excuse me for continuing my preparations with such haste. I have promised to be there by ten o'clock.

THE SCHOLAR

Do not let me delay you an instant. It merely occurred to me that you might take some comfort from the fact that history bears you out.

THE GENTLEMAN

History undoubtedly will bear me out, if that is what you mean.

THE SCHOLAR

I mean that throughout the long progress of man there has inevitably at certain times arisen a point of conflict between two people that was absolutely irreconcilable. At such times the very best of people have recognized a primal necessity.

[Enter THE SECOND bustling]

THE SECOND

The Doctor will be here shortly. We are not half ready, sir. You should have been practising this last quarter hour.

THE SCHOLAR

I'm afraid I have detained him.

THE GENTLEMAN

Not at all. Don't hurry. I like to hear you talk. You say so well just what I feel.

THE SECOND

Yes, yes, but the time for talking has passed. We have little time now. Come with me, sir, into the next room. We must practise at once.

THE GENTLEMAN

Very well. [To THE SCHOLAR] Nevertheless, do not hurry, my friend. Perhaps you will even come with us at ten.

THE SCHOLAR

Thank you. I'll think about it. It may be that it is the duty of some of us to see such things as this and put them in their proper place for the world. [THE GENTLEMAN and THE SECOND go out.]

Nevertheless, it is all very appalling—or would be if it were not true.

[He picks up a magazine. From time to time thereafter the shots of practising with a revolver are heard from the next room. Through the outside door enter THE DOCTOR and THE MINISTER.]

THE DOCTOR

[Snapping open his watch]

It is just 9.29. He said to be here at 9.30. [Glances at SCHOLAR] Can you tell me where they are, sir?

THE SCHOLAR

I think you will find them in there practising.

THE DOCTOR

[Opens door to inner room]

Good morning, gentlemen.

THE SECOND

[Inside]

We'll be with you soon, doctor. We've got to practise. We have lost time.

THE DOCTOR

Yes, yes, I understand. I'll wait here for you.
[Closes door. Puts square black case on table.]
They never are prepared.

THE SCHOLAR

[To THE MINISTER]

I am rather surprised to see you here, sir. Do you think anything can be done to stop this appalling business?

THE MINISTER

Do you think anything can be done to stop volcanoes?

THE SCHOLAR

I do not myself, but I thought your experience with humanity might have taught you something.

THE MINISTER

There are tremendous human passions, brother,—passions that know no control. How would we feel if a man wronged *our* daughter?

THE SCHOLAR

I know. I know. It has always been so in history.

THE MINISTER

And you, doctor, how would you feel if a man wronged your daughter?

THE DOCTOR

[Winking]

Perhaps I should say that he was stirred by a tremendous human passion that knew no control.

THE MINISTER

[*Taken aback*]

What, sir? Do you not agree with me that the duty of this father is clear?

THE DOCTOR

I neither agree nor disagree with you. I know only that this is a case where I can be of service to mankind. I shall attempt to save the life of the man who is shot.

THE SCHOLAR

I see your point of view perfectly. I feel the same way myself. I too have a service here for mankind. I shall attempt to explain and describe this phenomenon for the benefit of sober minds.

THE MINISTER

Of course, of course, and I too have a duty, only I trust it is a higher one. It is my duty to seal the cause of justice and right with the sacrament. Here is a man going forth to fulfil a sacred cause—the protection of womanhood, the keeping of life inviolate. I want him to feel that God is on his side. I desire him to go forth so imbued with the spirit of right that he cannot fail.

THE SCHOLAR

My dear sir, let me congratulate you. You inspire me with the belief that at last we shall have a religion which will coincide with our intel-

lect. I congratulate you on outgrowing those sickly teachings of Christ.

THE MINISTER

What, what? You misunderstand. I preach, indeed, the highest Christianity. I preach the very things I learned from the wisest professors of religion at my university.

THE SCHOLAR

It may be. Nevertheless, I have hopes of you.
[*The door opens. Small boy appears*]

Boy

Say, where's it goin' to be?

THE MINISTER

Where is what going to be?

Boy

Why, the fight. Ain't that what you're all waitin' to see?

THE SCHOLAR

You run along, little boy.

THE MINISTER

This is no place for children at such a time.

Boy

Gee! I'd like to see it as well as you. Why can't you give a fellow a show?

THE DOCTOR

[Winking]

Say, you keep quiet about it, will you? And meet us at St. James Place. Clear out now. Remember.

Boy

Aw, you're kidding me.

THE DOCTOR

Just to show you I'm not, I'll give you this.
[Gives him a coin]

Boy

[Reluctantly]

All right, thanks.

[Goes out where he can be heard shouting: "Oh, fellers, come along with me. There's going to be a fight."]

THE DOCTOR

Confound the little rascal!

THE SCHOLAR

I often think that's the true military age—from six to twelve.

[Enter THE SECOND]

THE SECOND

Well, we're somewhere near ready at last. I wish I'd had half an hour more with him. He still shoots before he aims.

[Enter THE MEDDLER]

[15]

THE MEDDLER

What's this I heard that boy shouting? Is there a man here who is going to fight a duel?

THE MINISTER

Well, what if there is, brother? Do we not all fight duels with Sin?

THE MEDDLER

[In louder voice]

I asked a simple question. Is there a man here who has it in his heart to kill?

THE SECOND

Say, if you know what's for your own good, you'll quit that kind of talk. *[Aside to DOCTOR]* The Governor's having hard enough time as it is. His nerves are all upset now!

THE SCHOLAR

It would be very interesting to know what you would do, sir.

THE MEDDLER

There is but one thing to do in all our human relations. It is to love. Nothing else works.

THE MINISTER

And so you'd love a man who wronged your daughter, would you?

THE SCHOLAR

This is a very interesting specimen.

THE SECOND

I suppose you'd love me if I hit you?

THE MEDDLER

Others have hit me and I have loved them.
You harm yourself if you strike me. You harm
yourself whenever you have it in your heart to
kill.

THE MINISTER

But we save other people from being harmed,
brother.

THE DOCTOR

Ha! Ha! That's a good one.

THE SECOND

[Aside]

Come, come, this is no time for talk.

THE MEDDLER

You think, then, it will help other people if
one of these men kills the other?

THE MINISTER

The right is bound to prevail.

THE MEDDLER

You think it will help if the father of the girl
is killed?

THE MINISTER

He will not be killed.

THE SCHOLAR

Oh, I don't know. Let us be honest. I do not find assurance in history that he will not be killed.

THE MINISTER

At any rate, he will have died for the right.

THE MEDDLER

And even if it should be the other man who is killed, would it help, I say? Would it right his daughter's wrong?

THE MINISTER

It would be a lesson to evil-doers.

THE MEDDLER

Is it the best lesson we can give them? Will it prevent evil-doing?

THE SCHOLAR

History shows but one law—the law of might.

THE MINISTER

And the law of right! They are the same thing.

THE MEDDLER

You are mistaken, gentlemen. Right is love.

THE SECOND

Say, we've had about enough of this philosophical discussion. [*Looks nervously at the inner door.*]

THE SCHOLAR

Yes, my friend, you forget that it is too late now. The thing has been settled.

THE MEDDLER

Why, this man has not killed yet, has he?

THE DOCTOR

You should have talked before the challenge was issued. Now you must wait until it's over.

THE SCHOLAR

You come around afterward. We'll talk brotherhood all you want then.

THE MINISTER

There is but one business in hand now. It is disagreeable business and we can have no interruptions.

THE SCHOLAR

You see the man's honor is involved.

THE MEDDLER

You do not understand. So long as he has not killed, it is not too late. I must talk with him. Surely he can be made to see that he is on the path of destruction.

THE SECOND

You cannot talk with him.

THE MEDDLER

I must talk with him.

THE SECOND

Oh, you think you will, do you?
[*They all rush toward him. THE MEDDLER puts up his hand.*]

THE MEDDLER

Back, I say! Back! [*He rises above them.*]
There is a power here that you must not profane.
I love this man here. I love you all. You cannot
harm a man who loves you. [*They stand for a moment tense. All of a sudden THE MEDDLER drops on his knees before them, praying in silence. They drop back, held by his influence. They converse together.*]

THE SECOND

This is a pretty pickle. He'll be out any
minute. It's quarter of ten now.

THE MINISTER

The man's honor is at stake.

THE SECOND

If he should drop out now, everybody would
call him a coward.

THE MINISTER

And Society would suffer. That's the point,
Society would suffer! Men would wrong all our
daughters with impunity.

THE SCHOLAR

This man is a superstitious mystic. Shall we let him interfere with the recognized rights of civilization?

THE MEDDLER

Oh, God, help me to show these men that there is no honor except the honor of an unsullied soul. Help us to be brave with Truth and not with revolvers. Fill us with the spirit of love that alone can master our passions. Give us the courage to love our enemies.

THE SECOND

Come, men! [*He rushes at THE MEDDLER.*]

THE SCHOLAR

I dislike touching the fellow.

THE MINISTER

For the sake of Society, we must! [*They close in on THE MEDDLER, who rises to his feet.*]

THE MEDDLER

I will be heard. [*Shouts*] Is there a man here who would kill? Is there a — [THE SECOND claps his hand over THE MEDDLER's mouth.]

THE MINISTER

The time for talking has passed.

THE SECOND

Here, in here with him! It won't do any good to put him out-doors. That would only raise a

disturbance among the people. [*They open the door of a closet and push THE MEDDLER in.*] Get in there! [*They close the heavy door. THE SECOND locks it. There is a silence.*]

THE MINISTER

[*Shuddering all over*]

Ugh! That was an ugly business!

THE DOCTOR

Oh, no! That was nothing at all to what I've often had to do.

THE SCHOLAR

I am surprised to find I had such an instinct against tussling with a person.

[*Silence. The door opens, and THE GENTLEMAN comes out. His face is very sober and pale.*]

THE GENTLEMAN

Well, I think I am ready at last. [*He straightens his shoulders.*]

THE MINISTER

It is good to see a man ready to do his duty.

THE GENTLEMAN

Ah, sir, I am glad you are here. You give me fresh courage that I am right. Was it you, then, that I heard talking?

[*THE MINISTER colors*]

THE DOCTOR

I think very likely.

THE GENTLEMAN

Will you all come with me?

[*A faint, indistinguishable voice comes from the closet.*]

THE GENTLEMAN

What was that noise?

THE SECOND

Oh, just a friend of mine in the drawing-room, who is waiting for me here till I come back.

THE GENTLEMAN

Well, I hope I shall meet him later, then.

THE DOCTOR

We must be going, I suppose.

THE VOICE

[*Faintly*]

What will it profit if there is murder done?

THE GENTLEMAN

[*Starting*]

Is that your friend?

THE SECOND

It is nothing. He is hysterical.

THE VOICE

[*Louder*]

I am the Truth. Hear me. It is never too late to hear the Truth.

THE GENTLEMAN

I am afraid it is too late for me. I have said the word that no gentleman draws back.

[23]

THE VOICE

What is that compared with the Truth?

THE SECOND

Come, come! This is no time for talking.

THE VOICE

Oh, hear me! I love you. I love all mankind.
Hear me! Let me teach you love.

THE GENTLEMAN

What is this he says? I think I should not
like to see your friend. Let us go. It is nearly
ten o'clock.

THE MINISTER

Yes, there is but one voice, the voice of duty.

THE VOICE

You cannot smother me. I have been gaining
strength through all the ages.

THE SECOND

Come! He's only a crank that talks about
being good to people.

THE GENTLEMAN

Let him talk to the man who wronged my
daughter!

[Silence. They go out.]

THE VOICE

My God! My God! Are they going to crucify
me again?

*[Silence. There is the sound of some one pound-
ing on the door.]*

CURTAIN

BOLO AND BABETTE

THE VOICE OF BEAUTY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

BABETTE, *a very little boy*

NELL, *a fat girl*

THE RED-HAIRED GIRL

NED, *a weasen-faced boy*

BOLO

SCOUT

RUNNY

SECOND SCOUT

BUD, *a wild-eyed boy*

CHICK, *a pale-faced boy*

THIRD SCOUT

THE WISE BOY

BOLO AND BABETTE

[SCENE: *The slope of a pasture with a clump of pines in the foreground. Strewn beneath the pines are the remains of paper wrappings and broken egg-shells. Nearby stands a cairn and the ground about is covered with a coarse grass with stretches of blueberry and sweet fern bushes. The pasture is in the foothills; in the background the land rises in cliffs until it goes out of sight among the clouds.*]

VERY LITTLE BOY

I wonder where Bolo is.

FAT GIRL

My goodness, I'm tired. I've done a two weeks' washing in the brook.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

You ought to take it easier, Nell. You're too heavy for such work.

WEAZEN-FACED BOY

Come, come, don't you humor her. It'll be a good thing for her to sweat.

[27]

RED-HAIRED GIRL

Oh, I don't know. We're not like the Picks down in the valley. We don't have to do our own work. What's the good of our being up here so far if we have to do everything like common people?

NELL

Well, all I know is that I'm tired.

WEAZEN-FACED BOY

Sometimes it seems to me that all we care for here is to think about our being fat and try to get slim or else think about our being slim and try to get fat.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

You're awful smart, Ned, ain't you?

NELL

What you got that's better to think about?

NED

What I say is: we all ought to work together more on our pasture. We ought to build a good strong fence about it; and we ought to sing the songs about our pasture that the older boys taught us.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

They were wise ones—those older boys.

NED

You bet they were. When they came up out of the valley, they had to stand all sorts of things

—hunger and bears and fights and the others' making fun of them. They fought for this pasture and a lot of them died too. Just think of what they did for us. If we're up above the Picks and the Bullheads and the others down in the valley, we owe it all to them.

NELL

I wonder how they happened to come here. Gee, it's a hard climb.

NED

Oh, they came for different reasons, I guess. Some of them suspected there was better ground here; some of 'em wanted adventure; some of 'em wanted to get away from the rest. And of course we know what they said themselves was the reason.

NELL

You mean they thought there was a path?

NED

Why, they said that they followed the foot-steps of a Grown-Up Person, and the footprints led them here.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

I wonder if it is true that there are Grown-Up People.

NED

Well, there was one once anyway, they say, because they saw his footprints in the meadow and up the hill—just as clear as starlight.

[29]

VERY LITTLE BOY

I'd like to be a Grown-Up Person.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

I don't see how they knew it was a Grown-Up Person if they never saw one.

NED

Silly! The marks in the soil were the same as ours only they were bigger. None of us ever made marks like them and never can.

NELL

Don't be too sure about that. If I keep on growing, I'll make bigger marks than any you've ever seen.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

You won't ever walk far enough, though, so's they'll show much.

VERY LITTLE BOY

Here comes Bolo now. Oh, Bolo! Bolo!
[*Runs toward him delighted.*] What's the matter, Bolo? Are you limping?

[*Enter BOLO*]

NED

Where've you been all morning?
[*BOLO's hand is over his eyes. He draws it away slowly and stands for a moment staring with keen, penetrating eyes at empty space.*]

[30]

RED-HAIRED GIRL

Bolo's got 'em. [*Laughs*]

BOLO

[*Dreamily*]

Such beauty! I never dreamed it could be. [*Turning quickly to the others.*] Listen! I have seen today the things that I have never seen before. I have seen the things that count. You must come with me. I came back to get you. We must drop everything. We must leave here and go up, up, up—Oh, through the trees, through the flowers, up, up the mountain, into the clouds! Up where the stars are!

VERY LITTLE BOY

Oh, Bolo! Will you take me?

RED-HAIRED GIRL

You're crazy, Bolo!

BOLO

No, I mean it. I shall prove it to you. What dreary lives we have been living! And that was here all the time. Yes, Babette, you shall go. I am going to tell the others and we shall all go together.

BABETTE

[*Jumping up and down*]

Oh, we shall see the mountain!

[31]

NED

What! You think we're going to leave our pasture?

BOLO

Oh, you haven't seen yet. When I show you, you will understand.

NED

What do you think the Chief will think about it? After working on our fence and our cabins and getting everything fixed up?

BOLO

Listen. I will prove why we must go.

NELL

Say, I've climbed this hill twice this morning, coming up from the brook with my washing. You don't think I'm goin' to climb any mountain, do you?

RED-HAIRED GIRL

Lots of people have seen the mountain before. But they didn't lose their heads over it.

BOLO

Oh, why can't you wait till I tell you? I was walking over at the other side of the pasture when I noticed a thicket of silver birches across the wall. They were so slender and white and beautiful, and the grass underneath them was so green and soft like velvet that I jumped over the

wall and ran about under them, singing one of our songs.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

Silly!

BOLO

And then, suddenly, at one end of the thicket, where the ground was soft and there was a strip of soil almost bare, except for some moss, I saw—just as clear as my fingers here—the footprint of a Grown-Up Person!

NELL

You don't say!

RED-HAIRED GIRL

How do you know it was?

BOLO

Oh, you couldn't mistake it. It was just like ours only larger—much larger. Besides, I found it more than once.

NED

Where did the footprints go?

BOLO

They led away from the pasture. At first they were hard to follow because, wherever the grass broke in, they didn't show well. But I ran along in the general direction of them and kept finding them until I got to the forest at the foot of the mountain. There it was easy because you could

see where the undergrowth had been beaten down into a line. I ran along the line, underneath and around the big trees, across a brook and up—all the time. There were cliffs and steep places but I climbed them—Oh, all along the way it was glorious! Every once in a while I could look out and see down below me our pasture and below that the valley. And I wanted to call to you all to come, and still I wanted to go. I felt as though at any moment I might find the Grown-Up Person right ahead of me around a turn in the path. I know now that that was foolish. It will take a long while to find him.

BABETTE

Oh, I am going to go with you, Bolo, and find him.

BOLO

Yes, Babette, we shall go. I went up and up and finally—Oh, how shall I describe it?—I came out on a beautiful field of flowers. Reds and yellows and blue like the sky! Oh, it was wonderful! And I could see out over all the country below me—the brook and the pastures of the Picks and the Bullheads and 'way beyond.

NED

Did the footsteps go on?

BOLO

Yes, I could see where they went through the flowers, and I went through the flowers too,

singing a song to them. And in a little while I came to cliffs where I had to scramble for a foothold on the rocks. And here I was guided less by the footprints than by the fact that there was only one way to go. It was as if, now that I had caught the general drift of the path, I could not lose it. And there is a strange thing about this too: whenever I was on the path, a feeling seemed to spread all over me that this was the right way; but if my steps strayed from it, I had a feeling that I must retrace them. And every once in a while I would stumble on the reassurance of a footprint. So I went up into the clouds and I know now that this path, if one follows it, will lead straight to the top of the peak.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

And will it end there?

BOLO

I do not think so. I think it will lead on from peak to peak; and if it should end at some place, why, there at its end we should find the Grown-Up Person, and we would stay with him and be with him forever. And—

NED

And supposing it never ended?

BOLO

Why, then, we should follow it all our lives; and we could not at any rate do better with our

lives; for this I know: that along this path we should see all the wonders and glories of the world. And what more is there that any one can do than that?

NELL

I guess I wouldn't get far along a path like that.

BOLO

Oh, that is because you don't understand. If you would start on the way, you would be surprised to see how strong you had become.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

And what would we have to eat? And where would we sleep? And what would we have to cover ourselves with?

BOLO

I do not know, and yet I know that we should have enough to eat, and that we should sleep, and that we should be warm. For the Grown-Up Person has been along that way, and if he, being so much larger, could find food and shelter and clothing, then I am sure that we should find them. And, for that matter, I saw nuts and berries in plenty along the way, and fresh water, and there were big trees and holes in the rocks, and there were sheep and goats upon the mountain. But I took very little thought about them; for there was so much beauty all about. Yet

of course I know that we should need them and I know that they are there.

NED

I have been thinking about what you say, and it seems to me that here is where you make your mistake. This path may be as you say the path of a Grown-Up Person; but it is not the path for us. And it may be the path for you; but it is not the path for us. We have got a pasture here and we are comfortable. You say yourself you don't know where you will get food. Well, we do. And we know where we will sleep and what we will wear. And you say yourself you don't know where it will take you, nor whether it will ever end. Well, if you are crazy enough to take it, all right! Go ahead! Don't expect us to.

BOLO

Well, I am going to take it. And pretty soon you will come too.

NED

Why? What makes you think so?

BOLO

Because there is no other way for you to go.

BABETTE

I am going to go with you, Bolo.

[37]

BOLO

Yes, Babette. Everyone is going to go with me, even if they do not know it.

[*Enter a scout hurriedly*]

SCOUT

Everybody get ready here! [*Goes up the hill, talking.*] There is trouble in the valley. One of the Picks has struck a Bullhead. They say there is going to be a fight. [*Goes out*]

RED-HAIRED GIRL

That is just like those Picks. They are only half-civilized anyway.

NELL

My land! I hope they don't come up here.

NED

I wonder what the Chief will say.

BOLO

I am going to see him. I am going to try to get him to send word down to the valley about the footprints. If they knew about it, maybe they'd come with us instead.

NED

Well, as for me, I'd like to see a good fight. There hasn't been one for a long time. [*BOLO goes out.*] I guess I'll go too.

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RED-HAIRED GIRL

Here comes Runny.

[RUNNY *rushes up all out of breath.*]

RUNNY

Whew! Say! There's goin' to be a fight.

NED

Oh, tell us something new. Have they begun yet?

RUNNY

They prob'ly have by now. Gee! The Bull-heads are all mad as hornets; they say they've been darin' the Picks to fight for the last month, and they've just been waitin' for something to start. They're all scramblin' and gettin' pebbles for their slingshots and whenever they catch a Pick,—Goodnight!

NED

Gee, I want to see it, don't you?

[*Enter SCOUT*]

RUNNY

You bet I do.

SCOUT

The Chief says everybody is to keep their heads and get ready for anything. He's going to try to get them to stop the fight.

BABETTE

Oh, that's because he's seen Bolo!

NED

Nonsense! Keep still!

SCOUT

He says we must keep in our pasture and not mix up in the fight with them. *[Exit]*

RED-HAIRED GIRL

The Chief's pretty wise. He keeps his head.

NED

Why wouldn't he be? We choose him, don't we?

RED-HAIRED GIRL

If the Picks and the Bullheads had any sense, they wouldn't let their Chiefs run them the way they do.

NELL

They're only half-civilized anyway.

[Enter a wild-eyed boy out of breath]

WILD-EYED BOY

God! God damn it! Whoopee! They're fightin' like hell!

RUNNY

Come on! Let's go! Come on, Ned!

NELL

Ned! Don't you go and leave us here alone!

WILD-EYED BOY

I seen a Pick runnin' along beyond the brook, an' all of a sudden a God-damn Bullhead jumps

out an' says, "I got yer, you hell-bound shrimp,"
an' he jumps on him just like this. [*He leaps on
RUNNY's back and bears him to the ground,
where they roll over and over.*]

RUNNY

[*Between his teeth*]

Darn you, Bud, for jumpin' on me like that.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

You ought to remember what the Chief said.

NED

That's right, fellers! The Chief says not to
lose our heads.

BUD

See, now! That's what the Bullhead did to
the Pick, by God!

NED

Stop foolin' now, will you? Come on, and
let's all sing the pasture-song.

BUD

Sure, don't forget the pasture.
[*All except BABETTE form a circle and sing.*]

BABETTE

[*Who has been trying to understand.*]
I wish Bolo would come back.

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ALL

[Singing]

Oh, fair with your grass and your heather!
Oh, sweet with your berries and vines!
We run up the ridges together
And kneel to thee under the pines.

[All kneel]

Our pasture-land, dear pasture-land!
We rise and pledge our pasture-land!

NED

Babette! You were not singing. Come here.
[He starts toward BABETTE, who shrinks away.
He runs after him, catches him by the collar,
and brings him back.]
Sing now!

BUD

Sing, God damn you!

BABETTE

[Falteringly and out of tune.]

Oh, fair with your grass . . . [Breaks off
crying]

RED-HAIRED GIRL

What's the matter? What are you crying
about?

BABETTE

I used to think it was such a pretty song, and
now . . . you make me hate it! [Sobs]
[Enter pale-faced boy]

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NED

[*Giving BABETTE a push*]

Go on with you now, and the next time you hear the song, you sing, see? That's the way to treat kids that don't appreciate their pasture.

[BUD *kicks at BABETTE, who goes out.*]

RUNNY

What's the news, Chick?

CHICK

Well-l-l, not much!

BUD

God damn you, we asked you a civil question. What's the news?

CHICK

Well-l-l, they're fightin', all right.

NED

Come on! Tell us. You been up to the Rock?

CHICK

Well-l-l—

BUD

Oh, hell! I can't wait to hear you talk.
[*He throws a pine-cone at CHICK and runs out.*]

CHICK

If he'd stayed, I c'd have told him somethin'.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

Don't tell us if you don't want to.

CHICK

Well-l-l, I was up to the Rock . . . I guess Bolo's got into a mess.

NED

Of course he did—with his talkin' about foot-prints.

NELL

How did he?

CHICK

Well, you see, the Chief was busy o' course, thinkin' about the fight . . .

NED

Of course he was.

CHICK

. . . And Bolo couldn't wait. He tries to get in and begins to talk about how he'd found the footprints of a Grown-Up Person.

NED

What'd the Chief do?

CHICK

Well-l-l, Bolo, he didn't get in. Somebody says, "That's an old yarn. Get a new one;" and somebody else says, "What's that got to do with the fight?" And Bolo tried to talk, an'—so they threw him out.

NED

Good enough!

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CHICK

Well, that wan't all. Pretty soon some fellers come runnin' up. They were fellers Bolo had told about the tracks beforehand. An' they'd gone where Bolo said an' found the tracks.

RUNNY

It's so, then, is it? There are some tracks?

CHICK

Don't you be in a hurry! These fellers found the footprints, an' they went over as far as the mountain. But here's the point. They said they couldn't be sure the tracks went any further than the foot of the mountain.

RUNNY

How's that?

CHICK

Why, after that, there weren't any footprints they could see. They said Bolo himself might have knocked down the underbrush. There wasn't any proofs that it was a Grown-Up Person. They argue like this: we got this pasture because the boys before us followed some footprints here; the footprints didn't go any further then, or else they'd have found 'em. Now! We've found footprints goin' further; so what'll we do? Why, we'll just change the boundary of our pasture so as to include the footprints, see? They're goin' to ask the Chief to have the fence

changed. The pasture'll be all the bigger, that's all.

NED

Say! That was clever of them, wasn't it?

RED-HAIRED GIRL

They're wise ones, aren't they?

NED

What did Bolo do?

CHICK

Oh, he's all torn up. He says he's goin' to follow the footprints if nobody else does. He dared 'em to go up the mountain with him, and he'd show 'em the rest of the tracks.

NED

What did they say?

CHICK

Oh, not much. They just laughed an' said if he wanted the mountain, he could have it. You can't grow much on a mountain.

NED

Ha! Ha! They had him, didn't they?

CHICK

Well-l, that ain't all. Ev'rybody's hollerin' to the Chief to go down and fight.

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NELL

What'd they want to fight for?

CHICK

Well-l, they say, if the Bullheads lick the Picks,
they'll come up here and try to trim us.

NED

You can bet they would, too.

[Enter SCOUT up the hill]

RED-HAIRED GIRL

Oh! Something has happened!

SCOUT

Get ready here! Get ready!

NELL

[Screaming]

Something dreadful has happened!

SCOUT

[As he goes along]

Hurry! Get ready! The Bullheads have
jumped on a bunch of us in the valley. *[Exit]*

NED

[Jumping up and trying to look down the hill]

You wait and see! We're goin' to fight yet!
[Another scout enters. His nose is bleeding.]

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SCOUT

We hadn't hurt them. We were only going across the valley. They are as mad as hornets and ready to sting anybody. [*Hurries out*]

[BUD enters down the hill]

BUD

Come on, you damned lazy hens! They've struck some of our men. Who'll come with me and lick 'em? We're goin' to trim those lousy Bullheads.

RUNNY

Come on, Ned.

NED

Let's go and round up all the fellers. We'll get the Chief to lead us down there and clean 'em up.

BUD

Well, do something anyway.

NELL

What are you going to do with us? You aren't going to leave us here?

NED

Oh, you ain't of any 'count. You're a girl.

[*They go out*]

NELL

They're going to leave us alone. They're goin' to leave us alone. [*She weeps*] We're all so

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small. We're only children. My land! It's going to be dreadful here alone.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

You ain't so small as you try to make out.
[*As NELL continues to weep*] Shut up! You make me lonesome.

[*Enter BOLO and WISE BOY talking.*]

BOLO

I do not understand. I can show it all to them so clearly. You are close to the Chief. You talk to him and make him see.

WISE BOY

You see this is not the time. There is going to be a fight and you must wait until that is over.

BOLO

And then everybody will be too tired.

WISE BOY

Well, you must wait anyway.

BOLO

But why should we get into a fight when we could be going up there? All the while the Grown-Up Person is getting further away, and if we go down into the valley we shall have all the further to climb back.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

Oh, Bolo, you haven't got any red blood in you.

BOLO

We do not need to fear the Picks and the Bull-heads. We can try to get them to come with us. Oh, nobody understands how beautiful it is up there because no one will come and see.

NELL

Come up here quick where you can get a good look at them. They are all marching down into the valley, and there's just enough sun so as to shine on them. My land! It looks as if they were all afire! [*She goes out.*]

BOLO

[*Shouting at the others*]

Don't go that way! Come up with me and I will show you the footprints. You'll have all the more to climb when you come back.

RED-HAIRED GIRL

Bolo, you're a 'fraid-cat. I'm only a girl but I'm going to go and help them. [*She goes out.*]
[*From below can be heard a running series of shouts and songs and curses. BOLO stands staring fixedly. He starts down the hill. Then he turns and falls to the ground. Shadows begin to come. Everything is getting dark. BABETTE enters crying and shakes his fist at the valley.*]

BABETTE

Oh, how I hate them! And I loved them all so much!

BOLO

Babette!

BABETTE

Yes.

BOLO

Do not say that.

BABETTE

[Sobbing]

Oh, Bolo, what are we going to do?

BOLO

[Getting up and shaking himself]

Why, there is no question, Babette, about what we are going to do.

BABETTE

[Running up to him]

Oh, Bolo! Bolo! It will be all the better to go with you alone.

BOLO

Do not say that. It will be harder. But maybe—

BABETTE

What is it, Bolo?

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BOLO

I am going to take a light with us, and maybe as we go up the cliffs, they will see it gleaming. Then, when they come back, perhaps they will follow us.

WISE BOY

When they come back, they will have forgotten all about you. [*He goes out.*]

[*BOLO sits upon the cairn. There is an inward struggle. Then, going over, he takes BABETTE's hand and starts up the hill in long strides with which BABETTE cannot keep up.*]

BABETTE

Oh, quick, Bolo! Look here!

BOLO

What is it, Babette?

BABETTE

I have just seen your footprint here. Look! It is big! It is ever so much bigger than it was. It is like a Grown-Up Person's.

[*They bend in awe over the footprints. There is silence. As they arise and start again, their figures loom up large against the darkened sky. Along the hillside their shadows stretch, enormous, beyond the view. After they have passed over the hill, they can be heard singing.*]

CURTAIN

THE MADHOUSE

THE VOICE OF REASON

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PASKY, *a simple-minded person*

FIRST SOLDIER

SECOND SOLDIER

JEANSON, *a visitor*

DR. JOVIER

MAID

AN ATTENDANT

THE MADHOUSE

SCENE I

[SCENE: *A garden with a high wall running along one side of it. In the background can be made out a well-arranged group of large brick buildings, to which runs a lawn edged with trees.*]

[*A shot is heard.*]

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

Hey, there!

[*Another shot rings out from the other side of the wall, then another.*]

What are you doing?

[*Over the top of the wall appears a head, and a soldier drops down. He is wounded and looks around for a hiding-spot. There is a shout. Another soldier looks over the wall. They shoot at each other. The soldier in the garden falls. The other soldier clammers leisurely*]

down from the wall. The SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON runs up to the body and looks from first one to the other.]

Did you do that?

SOLDIER

Well, I got you at last, my buckie. [*He feels of the fallen man's heart and sees that he is dead.*]

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

What'd you do it for?

SOLDIER

[*Removing dead man's helmet*]

I guess I'll take that to send home for a souvenir.

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

What'd you do it for?

SOLDIER

Say! Are you dippy?

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

But don't you see? You've killed him.

SOLDIER

Sure I did. What'd you think I chased him half a mile for through the woods? T'have lunch with him? What sort of a joint is this anyway? I want something to eat.

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

What had he done to you?

SOLDIER

[Beginning to laugh]

Why, he's a rat. He's a Barb and I'm a Headlander. Savvy? He's an en-e-my.

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

But he's like you. He's like me. He's a man.

SOLDIER

[Good-humoredly]

Sure, he prob'ly wa'nt such a bad feller in his way either. But his country's at war with my country. *[Suspecting of a sudden that the man is deaf, he shouts]* At war! Don't you understand that? War! His country did my country a dirty trick.

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

[Uncomprehendingly]

Yes. Do you have to do it much?

SOLDIER

Do what? Kill 'em? Why, sure! Have to do it all the time—whenever I get a chance. *[Laughs]*

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

Are there many like you—out there?

SOLDIER

Well, there's more like me than there is like you. *[Laughs]* An' that's sayin' a good deal,

too. Why, if you went through the woods there across the wall, you'd find—well, I ain't sayin' how many, but you'd find a bunch of us and some guns. We're 'way over to nowhere, too. 'F you went over that way about a hundred miles you'd find our regular troops, an' there's about 50,000 there. An' out where they're really fightin'—why, there's hundreds of thousands and millions there.

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

I guess that's why Doctor Jovier told me it was better for me to stay here than go out there. You'd ought to see him.

SOLDIER

Sure, I'd like to see him if he'd give me something to eat.

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

Maybe he could do something for your mind.

SOLDIER

For my mind? Say! That's a good one!

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

Yes, he did a lot for me. My mind was sick and he helped me.

SOLDIER

So you think my mind is sick, eh?

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

I don't know. I think it may be. [*Meditates*]
Do you like to watch the clouds up there?

SOLDIER

You bet! 'F it's goin' to rain, I want to know it.

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

Do you like to see all these things growing in the garden—the way they sprout up in the spring and then grow and grow?

SOLDIER

Well, I'll tell you this, Bo. What I like better is to smell 'em cookin' over a good hot fire. Come along an' let's see if you can't scare up a bite for me, now.

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

[*Starting along with him*]

Do you like to see the sky full of little stars at night?

SOLDIER

That depends. Come on! I'm hungry.

SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON

Because, if you don't, maybe Doctor Jovier can help you. He taught me all that. And to watch the flowers and the bees, too.

SOLDIER

[*Laughing*]

Well, old boy, I don't wonder you think we're dipped. Sometimes I wonder if we aren't, myself. Lead on!

[*The SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON shakes his head ponderingly as he moves, and looks back at the dead body.*]

[*Winking*] Say, if you leave him there till spring and mix him in well, you'll find you'll have some swell potatoes next year. D'you know that?

[*The SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON looks at the body wonderingly; then, as comprehension comes slowly over him, he shrieks and runs on ahead toward the buildings.*]

[*Laughing as he follows*] Say! Ain't he the bird, though? I'd like to have the boys see him!

CURTAIN

SCENE II

[DR. JOVIER's library at the Ferrian Hospital for the Insane.]

THE VISITOR

I am simply astounded at the progress you have made, Doctor. When I was here twenty years ago, there was only a little two-story building, and you entertained me in a cold room in the attic. Nobody believed in you in those days.

DR. JOVIER

Oh, one has to get used to that.

THE VISITOR

And now everybody believes in you.

DR. JOVIER

Well, I am not so sure that they would if I told them all I had in mind, but maybe! We have only begun the study of psychiatry—only begun it. Why, Jeanson, it's amazing when you consider it—how all these centuries we've doctored people's bodies and never done a thing for their minds. If a person wasn't normal, we just lumped him in with the rest as crazy and put him in a madhouse. What did we know of the various diseases of the mind—melancholia, epileptia dementia, katatonia, paranoia, dementia

præcox? Some of them curable and some of them not!

JEANSON

I know it. And see how many you have reclaimed.

DR. JOVIER

Yes, it's like reclaiming waste land. You feel that you've done something constructive.

JEANSON

[Walking to the window]

But what could one do, Doctor, if the land were all waste?

DR. JOVIER

[Deeply agitated]

What do you mean? What put that in your head?

JEANSON

[Shrugging his shoulders gloomily]

Why, one cannot forget the war nowadays, that's all. It is a Nemesis. It follows you everywhere. It is devastating our minds as well as our bodies.

DR. JOVIER

So you have been thinking that way, too, eh? By Jove, Jeanson, I could show you things about this waste land of ours, things that would shake you all but out of the saddle.

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JEANSON

I've been jounced around so much lately that they'd have to be pretty hard shakes, Doctor. I've got only one hope left as it is.

DR. JOVIER

What's that?

JEANSON

Why, that this will be the last war.

DR. JOVIER

Ha!

JEANSON

It's bound to be. We've got to see to that. [*There is a strained moment of silence.*] What is the matter? You do not think so? You are trying to spare my hopes, that is it, eh? Do not be afraid, Doctor. If you have any key to this terrific business, I'd like to have it.

DR. JOVIER

Perhaps we had better not go into that.

JEANSON

Go into it! Yes! Oh, Doctor, if you knew how this war had been gnawing into me! If you knew how I had walked the floor nights striving to see the meaning of it all! Before God, I don't see how we could have done anything else.

DR. JOVIER

[Interrupting sharply]

That is not the point. Excuse me.

JEANSON

It sounds funny to say it—I've been thinking about it for some time—but ever since I've been here at this place of yours, I've had a peculiar feeling of sanity. Of course I presume it's the reaction after seeing some of the inmates—a lot of them are pretty bad! I suppose the contrast brings it out. And yet when I think of the queer strained pitch of the city that I shall go back to—and when I think beyond that of the miles and miles of battlefield and the millions of men trying to kill each other, and all the dirty business! Doctor, my mind gets a little sick with it, a little out of tune. If you think you see anything that gets at the heart of it, any Truth here, tell me, in Heaven's name—no matter where it takes me—even if it opens up into a blank space beyond the stars.

DR. JOVIER

What if it opened up on a stagnant marsh?

JEANSON

Well! *[Savagely]* You'd have to prove it, that's all. You'd have to prove it to me, do you understand? I've got my mind with me yet.

[Enter MAID]

MAID

Mr. Pasky wishes to see you, Doctor. There is a soldier with him, sir. He wanted something to eat.

DR. JOVIER

A soldier! Did you get him something?

MAID

Yes.

DR. JOVIER

Is Pasky disturbed?

MAID

Yes, sir. He is very insistent.

DR. JOVIER

[To JEANSON]

Will you excuse me a minute? [*She goes out.*]

JEANSON

Certainly.

[*DR. JOVIER goes out. JEANSON with folded arms walks about the library. JOVIER comes back with the SIMPLE-MINDED PERSON and the SOLDIER.*]

DR. JOVIER

Well, well, mon ami! That was a distressing experience for you.

PASKY

I told him you might do something for his mind, Doctor.

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SOLDIER

[*Winking*]

He was bound I'd come along with him, you see, and I thought I'd humor him.

PASKY

[*Shuddering*]

He says he does it all the time—whenever he gets a chance.

DR. JOVIER

Yes, yes. Perhaps you had better go now, Pasky. [*Smilingly*] I'll do my best with this gentleman, rest assured. [PASKY goes out.]

SOLDIER

He's a queer one, ain't he? I'm much obliged for the meal they gave me out there, Doctor. I was blooming hungry. [*He starts away.*]

DR. JOVIER

Just a minute, sir. So far as I can make out, you and Pasky were each interested in the other's mind?

SOLDIER

[*Laughing*]

To tell the truth, when I was out there, you know, I couldn't help wondering to myself if this feller here wasn't sound after all, and it was us that was dipped. It struck me funny!

DR. JOVIER

But you evidently are not serious about it.

SOLDIER
[*Changing tone*]

What?

DR. JOVIER
Suppose we hold an examination here and see just what the trouble is.

SOLDIER
What d' you mean?

DR. JOVIER
Just that. There is something wrong somewhere with the way we look at things. You yourself suggested it—even if in fun. We are all three interested in this matter. Jeanson here will be strictly impartial and he will be the jury.

SOLDIER
I guess I ought to be going back to camp.

DR. JOVIER
Very well.
[*The SOLDIER hesitates. His curiosity appears in his face.*]

SOLDIER
Still I suppose I could stay a few minutes.

DR. JOVIER
Suit yourself. If you would really like to go into it, sit down.

[*The SOLDIER sits down*]

SOLDIER

Nobody ever accused me of that before . . .

DR. JOVIER

Nor do I now. I merely say there is something wrong, and that it's up to us to see if we can find out what it is.

SOLDIER

I'd like to know that myself.

DR. JOVIER

Now, then, you may ask if, after all, insanity is not merely a matter of point of view. You think Pasky's mind is not right, and Pasky thinks you're too dangerous to be at large. But there happen to be more of us who think as you do; so we shut Pasky up and let you go.

SOLDIER

Say! Maybe that's it!

DR. JOVIER

But I hold that we must judge by something deeper than that. I hold that we can examine a mind and see whether it runs true, in much the same way as we can use a level to see that a plank is set straight. And we are able to judge a mind in two ways: by the words the mind speaks and by the acts the individual performs.

JEANSON

That is clear.

DR. JOVIER

Now let us begin by admitting some things. I admit at once that Pasky's mind is not all it might be. It fails essentially to grasp the complex facts of life.

SOLDIER

Yes, sir.

DR. JOVIER

But mind you this: Pasky in his worst moments never harmed a human being, nor tried to injure in any way a fellow man. [*The SOLDIER's face falls*] You see you have something to account for. Pasky may be simple-minded, but your acts are against you. You have just killed a man.

SOLDIER

Well, of course, I am a soldier, if that is what you mean.

DR. JOVIER

Just why was it that you did this? You did it, did you not, because your country is at war with the dead man's country?

SOLDIER

That's it! That's what I told him. Of course!

DR. JOVIER

In other words, your country put you up to it. It instigated your doing this.

SOLDIER

Ye-es.

DR. JOVIER

You know, do you not, that killing another man is usually considered a crime?

SOLDIER

Not in time of war, and when he's trying to kill you.

DR. JOVIER

But the only reason he was trying to kill you was because his country is at war with yours.

SOLDIER

Yes.

DR. JOVIER

In other words, in each case, it was a country putting a man up to killing another man.

SOLDIER

Yes.

DR. JOVIER

So, while it may be that I could make out a case of weak-mindedness on your part for going into the business so readily, the major party to be considered is not you but your country.

SOLDIER

And I say right here, God bless her!

JEANSON

I don't know what we'd do without our countries. They educate us, they protect us, they make our whole civilization possible.

DR. JOVIER

I do not know either what we should do without our countries. But that is not the point. I do not know what I should have done without my father or my mother. I say the nations of the world have—all of them—got to be hauled before the judgment of Intelligent Man for what they have done. It is not this war alone. I wish you would forget this war. It is the whole vast system of wars that from the unknown past into the present have ravaged the hearts and the homes of mankind. There is no other species that so terribly fights within itself. What should we think of horses or of cattle or of dogs if they joined together into bands to ruin each other as men do? I tell you there is something rotten here, something diseased, something insane—if I know anything about insanity!

SOLDIER

Whew!

DR. JOVIER

Take Greece. Look at any century of her existence. You find four or five wars. First there is the terror of Persian militarism. It must be beaten back. It is beaten back. Then militarism springs up in Greece itself. Sparta is a menace. It must be crushed. In order to crush it, Athens must become militaristic; and the result was the terrible suicide of the Pello-

ponnesus. And no sooner is that over with than militarism bobs up hydra-headed in Macedonia with Philip and Alexander. Take Rome! Every generation had its fling in war, and in the time of Augustus, when there seemed no more worlds to conquer, they would put a thousand men at a time into the gladiatorial arena. I tell you there is something rotten here! Take any one of the nations today—I do not care which—and look back for a century. You will find that every generation had its war. And now we think we have militarism located in Barbia and that all we have to do is to crush it there. Before God, Jeanson, I do not see how you can hope in the light of history that this will be the last war!

JEANSON

[Deathly white]

I do not see, Doctor, how we could have acted differently.

SOLDIER

That's what I was going to say.

DR. JOVIER

How can we see it now? We are in the midst of an insane fit. You cannot expect an insane person to tell you how he should have acted.

JEANSON

I do not see how we could have acted differently in any one of the wars that you speak of.

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JEANSON

No, we do not see, because our minds have been drugged with the histories that tell us we did right. Not only is it insanity, but I can tell you the kind of insanity it is.

JEANSON

What's that you say?

DR. JOVIER

It has long been recognized by biologists that the individual reflects the race. This is not quite the same as saying that the individual reflects the nation; for it is the nation, not the race, that has been responsible for our wars. Yet so persistent is this insanity of warfare among the nations that it occurred to me it would be possible to apply the same principles of diagnosis that we apply to individuals.

JEANSON

What do you make of it then?

DR. JOVIER

In the first place I want you to note the periodicity of the disease. Warfare has surged over the world with almost the regularity of a natural phenomenon. That gives a clue. But that was not enough. If I could get at the brain of a nation, I thought, at what it was saying and thinking in time of war, then I should have proof.

JEANSON

But how could you do that?

SOLDIER

That's what I say. How?

DR. JOVIER

It is easy enough to find out what the individual thinks. But the nation—ah! that is different. What is the nation's voice? Certainly it is not the newspapers. If they spoke for the nation, we should have been at war long before we were. It is not, strictly speaking, the government. The government is the nation's electric light. Behind that government is a thread of wires running back to the dynamo. And mind you! The dynamo is not the whole people. It is that part of the people which has political power. My problem was to hear the dynamo.

JEANSON

You mean you could do that?

DR. JOVIER

Why not? We all recognize that there is a certain unanimity in the nation's thought. We feel it in ourselves. We know there is something "in the air." The only thing was to reproduce it. It was a delicate task.

JEANSON

But you did it?

DR. JOVIER

I was experimenting along this line before the war. There were endless attempts and endless failures. And then—all of a sudden—I hit on it. A little radium, a slightly higher voltage, and out of the air I got a strange weird current of almost indistinguishable voices. It was like a composite photograph. But along these currents I could hear the voice of a nation speaking. For a day at a time as I sat in my laboratory it would say the same thing over and over. And then—another day—when there was a change in the national pulse it would say something else—over and over. I made countless records, and then I found by combining them I had obtained on one wax disk the process of a nation's thought.

JEANSON

My God. It's uncanny!

[*Dr. Jovier presses a button and takes down a speaking tube.*]

DR. JOVIER

The phonograph, please. [*He pulls down the shutters, making the room dark, takes out a key and opens a cabinet.*] I had not thought I would go into this with you, Jeanson, but I cannot resist. I am chock full of it. Next week I am going to go before the Commission for the Study of the Insane with my findings.

[A man enters wheeling a large phonograph, leaves it, and goes out. Dr. Jovier comes forward with a record.]

I want you to picture to yourselves' this nation just before the war, and then during those first stages when we ourselves had not entered it. This great complex being, the State—*[He puts on the record]*—you are about to hear it speak.

SOLDIER

I hadn't thought I'd ever be surprised with anything again.

[There is a whirring noise. Out of the big horn of the phonograph comes a voice, at first hardly distinguishable.]

THE NATION

I am rich and strong—I am rich and strong—I am rich and—Ouch! Something has bitten me—Something has bit—I feel something coming over me—coming over me—Am I going to have that again?—Everything is black—I cannot see clearly—I do not know what to do—I am flabby and helpless—I am flabby and—What have I been doing all this time?—I must arouse myself—I cannot stand this—Damn you! It is you that are to blame—I will fix you—I will kill you, that is what I will do—Albia, you are a noble country—Napoland, you are a little white angel—Ah, I see everything clearly—clearly—at last—it is you that are to blame—I can think of

nothing but fighting—I would like to think of something else, but I can't—Come now—Come now—Everybody together—We will fight—We will fight—Ah, I see everything clearly now—I had forgotten my forefathers—What noble men they were!—I too am noble—I am brave too—I can fight too—You thought I had forgotten—eh?—You thought I was weak and white-livered, did you?—Ah, I will show you—show you—I am the chosen one of God—You are the brood of the Devil—God is with me—I am going to kill you because you oppress mankind—Oh, how I hate you!—hate you—And my hate is a just hate—The God of Joshua and David is with me—I am marching in the blood of the Lamb—The blood of the Lamb—I fight for humanity, understand that!—All through my life it is I that have stood for justice—Take that now, damn you!—Wait till I sight this gun at you—I will teach you—I will teach you—You know how I fought fifty years ago—I can fight better now—better now—now—whir—whir—r.

[It runs down]

DR. JOVIER

[Throwing up the shutters]

Ah, you are convinced!

JEANSON

It is true.

SOLDIER

I don't understand. You don't mean we're crazy?

DR. JOVIER

Wait! [*He bounds to a table and takes up a book.*] I want you to notice these points in the record. All of a sudden in the seemingly healthy body politic something "comes flying". Usually, there is some provocation. It is as if the big torpid mass of the nation were prodded with a stick. Then the consciousness begins to get *hazy*, and there are complaints that it cannot see clearly. There is a struggle of impulses here, I think, which does not show in the record. Certain elements in the mind are given over completely to the disease, and certain others still struggle for sanity like white corpuscles in the blood stream. Then, as the disease progresses, there is a sharp *narrowing of the horizon*; the country's mind can think of but one thing, the war, the fight. Watch closely here. These symptoms are unfailing. There is, throughout, an *exaggerated self-esteem* which in an individual would be insufferable conceit. We swagger with our uniforms and our weapons, and boast of our military exploits. *Delusions* appear; all of a sudden we find that Albia, whose greed we used to distrust, and Napoland, whose degeneracy we used to despise, now that we are allied to them, are as pure and as white as snow. Our mouths

become filled with *pious phrases and saws* about God and Justice and Humanity. Why, time and again our preachers almost turn my stomach! We have a decided *ill humor*, and—mark this—there is first a sort of *stupor* which changes quickly to a *rapidly recurring excitement*. We rush to arms, we work in a frenzy, we spend our money recklessly. The excitement becomes *maniacal*, and we plunge up to the hilt in the tremendous crime of war.

JEANSON

You make me feel like being an anarchist.

DR. JOVIER

[*Holding out the book*]

And, mind you, we are never sorry about it afterward. There has not been a nation in the world's history that has ever shown remorse. This is Kraftlin—the acknowledged authority the world over on insanity. Here, in his "Mental Diseases" are the symptoms: a *periodical attack*—the disease comes at fairly regular intervals; I showed you how every generation has its war; *the suddenness of the attack*—you heard the "Ouch"; *a haziness of the consciousness*—everything "got black"; *a narrowing of the horizon*—it could think of nothing else but fighting; *an exaggerated self-esteem*; *a tendency to pious phrases and saws*; possibly a running accompaniment of *delusions*—this symptom does not always

appear; *ill humor*; and a change from *stupor* to *rapidly recurring excitement*; attacks of *rage* with a *maniacal disturbance of the consciousness*: It is all here—one of the phases of epilepsy, if I know a case when I see it! The nations are moral imbeciles with an epileptic tendency.

[JEANSON *gets up, wipes his forehead with his handkerchief, throws up a window and stands looking out of it, breathing the fresh air. The soldier sits silently striving to understand what it is all about; the effect of the demonstration on JEANSON impresses him more than the demonstration itself.*]

JEANSON

It is true.

DR. JOVIER

Yes, it is not a symbol; it is not an allegory; it is the glaring white truth. What is more, take a look at the heredity of our nations. Study Greece and Rome and Egypt and Assyria and the rest. Insane fit after insane fit—crime—blood—disease—and death! We do not come of very healthy stock.

JEANSON

God! Are we going to end up with this?

DR. JOVIER

No sooner had I recognized the symptoms than I thought of Lombroso. When the great crim-

inologist asserted that epilepsy, using the word in its broad sense, is at the bottom of all crime, some of us thought that he had gone too far. We little realized how completely his diagnosis could be applied to the crimes of the nations. I do not know whether epilepsy is responsible for all the different kinds of crime on the part of individuals or not, but this I know: a crowd disease akin to epileptic insanity is at the bottom of war. Every nation that starts out to fight another with the tremendous claws of its army is criminally insane.

JEANSON

But it is usually provoked by some other nation.

DR. JOVIER

Where do you find a criminal that cannot bring forward some excuse for his crime? The other man struck him. The other man seduced his wife. He was ground down by poverty and ill usage. And yet the trace of a weak mentality is there. It is true that there are excuses here too. But no excuse is big enough to make up for this terrific crime—the impulse that sends an army out to wreak organized, deliberate murder, to lay waste a continent, to kill and kill and kill other groups of men that belong to the same great human family.

JEANSON

Oh, there is something rotten at our foundations. You make me see that.

DR. JOVIER

The political history of the world is very largely a record of the violent fits of the human herds. [JEANSON winces.] Ah, you do not like the word. Well, it is true! We live in herds, and little it takes to make us stampede.

JEANSON

[Turning quickly and grasping DR. JOVIER's arm.]

Tell me this: Is there no hope?

DR. JOVIER

I do not know. I have merely diagnosed the case. As for any remedy, that is another question. It is not an easy disease to cure.

JEANSON

Doctor! Can you give no hope at all?

SOLDIER

I don't see how, if we're all bugs, you're going to put us in an insti-too-tion.

JEANSON

Do you think the race is going to die a disgusting, imbecilic death? I do not care to live if we are rotten like this at the core.

DR. JOVIER

You must not say that. [*He takes JEANSON by the shoulders, looks him in the eye, and then strides back and forth.*] Listen! Do you know that the seeds of insanity and the seeds of health are in every one of us? I have often found in my dealings here with unfortunates that they have the same things at bottom as myself. There is a little trouble, a little clog somewhere, and they become abnormal. I too have the possibilities of abnormality. You have them. Everyone has them. You, within your own brain, have the impulses, which, if developed, can bring on melancholia, epilepsy, paranoia. Have you because of that fact no hope for yourself? Do you despair of sanity because in your own being you have the possibilities of mental disease?

JEANSON

[*Slowly*]

No.

DR. JOVIER

Well, then, so long as there is hope for the individual, there is hope for the race. We may not see how or whence, but it is there. It is for those who see to bring the nations before the judgment of Intelligent Man.

JEANSON

But you cannot cure an epileptic by teaching him that he is insane.

DR. JOVIER

No, but there are some things that we can do.

JEANSON

What?

DR. JOVIER

Well, it is obvious that we should not let an imbecile with an epileptic tendency have access to deadly weapons. We should blot all the guns and war-ships and bombs and all the hellish contrivances of our inhuman ingenuity off the face of the earth. They are not safe for our nations to have around.

JEANSON

That is what the pacifists have been howling for: disarmament.

DR. JOVIER

Yes, only it has got to be an absolute, complete disarmament, a renunciation of all the deadly, devilish weapons we have made. They have got to be put on the dump forever. [*To SOLDIER*] There wouldn't be any jobs in your line, my friend.

SOLDIER

Well, believe me, there's a big job in *your* line.

JEANSON

That's the pity of it. It's such a tremendous task.

DR. JOVIER

[*Brusky*]

I didn't say it wasn't, did I? Is it worth striving for or not?

JEANSON

Forgive me. [*He pauses*]. What else is there that we must do?

DR. JOVIER

For some time there has been a growing belief that the causes of insanity may be due to an internal poisoning. We know that in some cases at any rate this is true. We suspect it may be true in all. Now, it is well known that no nation has yet done its best by any means to get rid of the social poisons that infest it.

JEANSON

What do you mean? Liquor?

DR. JOVIER

That's a big one. We have been more or less soaked in alcohol since time immemorial. What alcohol does to the human brain has been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. The same with tobacco! [*The SOLDIER begins to show impatience.*] We admit all these things, and then dislike hearing them said again. We have a growing tendency toward opium, morphine,

heroin, and other drugs. The decadence of the drug-habit has spread all through our social structure. And prostitution—in and out of marriage—and venereal disease!

JEANSON

It is a sickening business. This civilization that we thought was going to bloom so gloriously—it looks as if it might be only a skunk-cabbage after all!

DR. JOVIER

Well, whatever it is, these things are true, and you and I and other sane men have got to recognize them. And, what is more, there has got to be a spiritual awakening! We think we've had one—that's the funny part of it—and bleat about Calvary with the stains of Cain all over us. We ought to get down in remorse at the business we've been up to—the millions of men that have been slain, the wealth of the world that has been destroyed. I can tell you this, Jeanson. There will be no civilization worthy the name until nations repent this sort of thing. The surest indication I know of the moral imbecile is that he is incapable of remorse. If, when this slaughter is over, the nations keep on condoning their behavior and even bragging about it, then I shall—do you know what I will do, Jeanson?—I shall open the doors of this institution, and I shall say to the inmates: "Go out! You are free!